OBSERVATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing data collected from **Clarksville Pond, Clarksville,** the program coordinators have made the following observations and recommendations.

Welcome to the New Hampshire Volunteer Lake Assessment Program! As your group continues to participate in VLAP each summer, the database created for your pond will help your monitoring group track water quality trends and will ultimately enable your group and DES to identify potential pollutant sources from the watershed that may affect pond quality.

We encourage your monitoring group to sample at least once per month during the summer months (**June**, **July**, and **August**). In addition, it may be necessary to conduct rain event sampling at multiple locations along a stream using the bracketing technique to identify sources of pollution. Furthermore, DES may recommend baseline studies that could involve bi-weekly or monthly sampling for an extended period of time at the discretion of the monitoring group.

We understand that future sampling will depend upon volunteer availability, funding, and monitoring goals. It is important to note that **water quality trend analysis is not feasible with a limited set of data points.** It will take many years to develop a statistically sound set of water quality baseline data. Specifically, after 10 consecutive years of data collection, we will conduct a simple statistical test to analyze significant changes in annual mean chlorophyll-a concentrations, total phosphorus concentrations, and Secchi disk transparencies. Therefore, frequent and consistent sampling will ensure useful data for future analyses.

Please contact the VLAP Coordinator early this spring to schedule the annual DES lake visit. **It would be best to schedule the DES visit for early June to refresh your sampling skills!**

Finally, please remember that one of your most important responsibilities as a volunteer monitor is to educate your association, community, and town officials about the quality of your pond and what can be done to protect it! DES biologists may be able to assist you in educating your association members by attending your annual lake association meeting. Remember to schedule biologists early for your lake association meeting.

Your pond is located in New Hampshire's North Country. North Country water bodies provide extensive benefits to New Hampshire tourists and residents. These benefits include recreational boating, fishing and swimming, economic stability, and scenic beauty. A 2007 study by A. Nordstrom, *The Economic Impact of Potential Decline in New Hampshire Water Quality*, estimated recreational activities dependent on lakes and rivers contributes more than $26 million in annual sales to the North Country and supports 419 jobs; of which fishing constitutes approximately $20 million and 330 jobs. The study also concluded that a perceived decrease in water quality could lead to an annual loss of $1.8 million and 29 jobs. Approximately 61% of those surveyed in the study indicated they would decrease visits to a lake or river if water quality declined.

The North Country clearly benefits from the pristine nature of its lakes and rivers. Managing these water resources should focus on how they are utilized. Since fishing constitutes a majority of usage, efforts should be made to maintain a healthy aquatic ecosystem.

Aquatic ecosystems are highly complex with a large number of factors impacting fish communities. Water quality, dissolved oxygen, algal growth, and aquatic plant populations can affect fish communities. Monitoring your pond through VLAP provides you with important information on water quality, dissolved oxygen and algal populations, and makes recommendations on how to maintain and/or improve current water quality conditions.

We recommend joining the DES Weed Watcher program to assess aquatic plant communities and to prevent the infestation of exotic aquatic plan species. Weed Watchers is a volunteer program dedicated to monitoring lakes and ponds for the presence of exotic aquatic plants. This program only involves a small amount of time during the summer months. Volunteers survey their waterbody once a month from **May** through **September**. To survey, volunteers slowly boat, or even snorkel, around the perimeter of the waterbody and any islands it may contain. Using the materials provided in the Weed Watcher kit, volunteers look for any species that are suspicious. After a trip or two around the waterbody, volunteers will have a good knowledge of its plant community and will immediately notice even the most subtle changes. If a suspicious plant is found, the volunteers immediately send a specimen to DES for identification. If the plant specimen is an exotic species, a biologist will visit the site to determine the extent of the problem and to formulate a management plan to control the nuisance infestation. Remember that early detection is the key to controlling the spread of exotic plants.

If you would like to help protect your lake or pond from exotic plant infestations, contact Amy Smagula, Exotic Species Program Coordinator, at 271-2248 or visit the Weed Watchers website at www.des.nh.gov/organization/divisions/water/wmb/exoticspecies/weed_watcher.htm.

We also encourage your monitoring group to continue utilizing the Plymouth State University Center for the Environment Satellite Laboratory in Plymouth. This laboratory was established to serve the large number of lakes/ponds in the greater North region of the state. This laboratory is inspected by DES and operates under a DES approved quality assurance plan. We encourage your monitoring group to utilize this laboratory next summer for all sampling events, except for the annual DES biologist visit. To find out more about the Center for the Environment Satellite Laboratory, and/or to schedule dates to pick up bottles and equipment, please call Aaron Johnson, laboratory manager, at (603) 535-3269.

FIGURE INTERPRETATION

CHLOROPHYLL-A

- **Figure 1 and Table 1:** Figure 1 in Appendix A depicts the historical and current year chlorophyll-a concentration in the water column. Table 1 in Appendix B lists the minimum, maximum, and mean concentration for each year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

  Chlorophyll-a, a pigment found in plants, is an indicator of the algal abundance. Algae (also known as phytoplankton) are typically microscopic, chlorophyll producing plants that naturally occur in lake ecosystems. The chlorophyll-a concentration measured in the water gives biologists an estimation of the algal concentration or lake productivity. **The median summer chlorophyll-a concentration for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 4.58 mg/m^3.**

  The current year data (the top graph) show that the chlorophyll-a concentration ***remained stable*** from **June** to **July**, and then ***increased slightly*** from **July** to **September**.

  The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2010** chlorophyll-a mean is ***less than*** the state and similar lake medians. For more information on the similar lake median, refer to Appendix F.

  This observation is based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence. After 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean chlorophyll-a concentration since monitoring began.

  While algae are naturally present in all lakes and ponds, an excessive or increasing amount of any type is not welcomed. In freshwater lakes and ponds, phosphorus is the nutrient that algae typically depend upon for growth in New Hampshire lakes. Algal concentrations may increase as nonpoint sources of phosphorus from the watershed increase, or as in-lake phosphorus sources increase. Therefore, it is extremely important for volunteer monitors to continually educate all watershed residents about management practices that can be implemented to minimize phosphorus loading to surface waters.

TRANSPARENCY

- **Figure 2 and Tables 3a and 3b:** Figure 2 in Appendix A shows the historical and current year data for transparency with and without the use of a viewscope. Table 3a in Appendix B lists the minimum, maximum and mean transparency data without the use of a viewscope and Table 3b lists the minimum, maximum and mean transparency data with the use of a viewscope for each year that the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

  Volunteer monitors use the Secchi disk, a 20 cm disk with alternating black and white quadrants, to measure how far a person can see into the water. Transparency, a measure of water clarity, can be affected by the amount of algae and sediment in the water, as well as the natural lake color of the water. **The median summer transparency for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 3.2 meters.**

  The current year data (the top graph) show that the non-viewscope in-lake transparency ***increased gradually*** from **June** to **September**. Field data sheets indicate the Secchi disk was visible on the pond bottom during the June and September sampling events. This indicates that a deeper spot was identified to collect samples from in September, great job!

  The historical data (the bottom graph) show that the **2010** mean non-viewscope transparency is ***slightly less than*** the state median and is ***slightly greater than*** the similar lake median. Please refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

  The current year data (the top graph) show that the viewscope in-lake transparency was ***greater than*** the non-viewscope transparency on the **September** sampling event. The transparency was ***not*** measured with the viewscope on the **June** or **July** sampling events. A comparison of transparency readings taken with and without the use of a viewscope shows that the viewscope typically increases the depth to which the Secchi disk can be seen into the lake, particularly on sunny and windy days. We recommend that your group measure Secchi disk transparency with and without the viewscope on each sampling event.

  It is important to note that viewscope transparency data are not compared to a New Hampshire median or similar lake median. This is because lake transparency with the use of a viewscope has not been historically measured by DES. At some point in the future, the New Hampshire and similar lake medians for viewscope transparency will be calculated and added to the appropriate graphs.

Please keep in mind that this observation is based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence. As previously discussed, after 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean transparency since monitoring began.

Typically, high intensity rainfall causes sediment-laden stormwater runoff to flow into surface waters, thus increasing turbidity and decreasing clarity. Efforts to stabilize stream banks, lake and pond shorelines, disturbed soils within the watershed, and especially dirt roads located immediately adjacent to the edge of tributaries and the lake or pond should continue on an annual basis. Guides to best management practices that can be implemented to reduce, and possibly even eliminate, nonpoint source pollutants, are available from DES upon request.

TOTAL PHOSPHORUS

- **Figure 3 and Table 8:** The graphs in Figure 3 in Appendix A show the amount of epilimnetic (upper layer) phosphorus and hypolimnetic (lower layer) phosphorus; the inset graphs show current year data. Table 8 in Appendix B lists the annual minimum, maximum, and median concentration for each deep spot layer and each tributary since the pond has been sampled through VLAP.

  Phosphorus is typically the limiting nutrient for vascular aquatic plant and algae growth in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds. Excessive phosphorus in a lake or pond can lead to increased plant and algal growth over time. **The median summer total phosphorus concentration in the epilimnion (upper layer) of New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is 12 ug/L. The median summer phosphorus concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer) is 14 ug/L.**

  The current year data for the epilimnion (the top inset graph) show that the phosphorus concentration ***decreased slightly*** from **June** to **July**, and then ***increased*** from **July** to **September**.

  The historical data show that the **2010** mean epilimnetic phosphorus concentration is ***slightly greater than*** the state and similar lake medians. Refer to Appendix F for more information about the similar lake median.

  The epilimnetic turbidity sample was ***slightly elevated*** on the

September sampling event (**1.68 NTUs**). The field data also indicate the sample was collected at 4 meters, immediately off the pond bottom. This suggests that the pond bottom may have been disturbed by the anchor or by the Kemmerer Bottle while sampling and/or that the pond bottom is covered by an easily disturbed thick organic layer of sediment. When the pond bottom is disturbed, phosphorus rich sediment is released into the water column and is potentially what caused the increase in the September phosphorus concentration. When collecting the hypolimnion sample, make sure that there is no sediment in the Kemmerer Bottle before filling the sample bottles.

Please keep in mind that this observation is based on limited data. As your group expands its sampling program to include additional events each year, we will be able to determine trends with more accuracy and confidence. As discussed previously, after 10 consecutive years of sample collection, we will be able to conduct a statistical analysis of the historical data to objectively determine if there has been a significant change in the annual mean phosphorus concentration since monitoring began.

One of the most important approaches to reducing phosphorus loading to a waterbody is to continually educate watershed residents about the watershed sources of phosphorus and how excessive phosphorus loading can negatively impact the ecology and the recreational, economical, and ecological value of lakes and ponds.

TABLE INTERPRETATION

- **Table 2: Phytoplankton**

  Table 2 in Appendix B lists the current and historical phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the pond. Specifically, this table lists the three most dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the sample and their relative abundance in the sample.

  The dominant phytoplankton and/or cyanobacteria observed in the **June** sample were ***Ceratium*** **(Dinoflagellate)**, ***Dinobryon*** **(Golden-Brown)**, and ***Synura*** **(Golden-Brown)**.

  Phytoplankton populations undergo a natural succession during the growing season. Please refer to the "Biological Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation regarding seasonal plankton succession. Diatoms and golden-brown algae populations are typical in New Hampshire's less productive lakes and ponds.

- **Table 4: pH**
  Table 4 in Appendix B presents the in-lake and tributary current year and historical pH data.

  pH is measured on a logarithmic scale of 0 (acidic) to 14 (basic). pH is important to the survival and reproduction of fish and other aquatic life. A pH below 6.0 typically limits the growth and reproduction of fish. A pH between 6.0 and 7.0 is ideal for fish. The median pH value for the epilimnion (upper layer) in New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **6.6**, which indicates that the state surface waters are slightly acidic. For a more detailed explanation regarding pH, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

  The pH at the deep spot this year ranged from **7.36** to **7.49** in the epilimnion, which means that the water is ***slightly basic***.

- **Table 5: Acid Neutralizing Capacity**
  Table 5 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical epilimnetic ANC for each year the pond has been monitored through VLAP.

  Buffering capacity (ANC) describes the ability of a solution to resist changes in pH by neutralizing the acidic input. The median ANC value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **4.8 mg/L**, which indicates that many lakes and ponds in the state are at least "moderately vulnerable" to acidic inputs. For a more detailed explanation about ANC, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

  The mean acid neutralizing capacity (ANC) of the epilimnion (upper layer) was **17.0 mg/L**, which is ***much greater than*** the state median. In addition, this indicates that the pond has a ***low vulnerability*** to acidic inputs.

- **Table 6: Conductivity**
  Table 6 in Appendix B presents the current and historical conductivity values for tributaries and in-lake data. Conductivity is the numerical expression of the ability of water to carry an electric current, which is determined by the number of negatively charged ions from metals, salts, and minerals in the water column. The median conductivity value for New Hampshire's lakes and ponds is **40.0 uMhos/cm**. For a more detailed explanation, please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report.

The mean annual epilimnetic conductivity at the deep spot this year was **47.7 uMhos/cm**, which is ***approximately equal to*** the state median.

Typically, elevated conductivity indicates the influence of pollutant sources associated with human activities. These sources include failed or marginally functioning septic systems, agricultural runoff, stormwater runoff, and road runoff which can contain road salt during the spring snow-melt. New development in the watershed can alter runoff patterns and expose new soil and bedrock areas, which could also contribute to increasing conductivity. In addition, natural sources, such as iron and manganese deposits in bedrock, can influence conductivity.

It is possible that de-icing materials applied to nearby roadways during the winter months may be influencing the conductivity in the pond. In New Hampshire, the most commonly used de-icing material is salt (sodium chloride).

Therefore, we recommend that the **epilimnion** (upper layer) be sampled for chloride next year. This additional sampling may help us identify what areas of the watershed are contributing to the increasing in-lake conductivity.

Please note that the DES Limnology Center in Concord is able to conduct chloride analyses, free of charge. As a reminder, it is best to conduct chloride sampling in the spring as the snow is melting and during rain events.

- **Table 8: Total Phosphorus**
  Table 8 in Appendix B presents the current year and historical total phosphorus data for in-lake and tributary stations. Phosphorus is the nutrient that limits the ability of algae and aquatic plants to grow and reproduce. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

  Since **Clarksville Pond** is primarily groundwater-fed, inlet sampling is not part of the routine sampling program. It would be a good idea to sample surface runoff areas early in the spring soon after snowmelt or after a rain event to determine the quality of water that flows into the pond in this manner.

  Stormwater runoff typically transports the majority of phosphorus to surface waterbodies. Efforts should be made in the watershed to reduce impervious surfaces and limit phosphorus sources such as fertilizer use, septic influences, agricultural impacts, and sediment/erosion control.

- **Table 9 and Table 10: Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Data**
  Table 9 in Appendix B shows the dissolved oxygen/temperature profile(s) collected during **2010**. Table 10 in Appendix B shows the historical and current year dissolved oxygen concentration in the hypolimnion (lower layer). The presence of sufficient amounts of dissolved oxygen in the water column is vital to fish and amphibians and bottom-dwelling organisms. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

  The dissolved oxygen concentration was ***high*** at all deep spot depths sampled in the pond on the **June, August and September** sampling events. The dissolved oxygen concentration was low, **0.3 mg/L**, at **3 meters** on the **July** sampling event. This low level may have been a meter error or the dissolved oxygen probe may have been in contact with the pond bottom. Typically, shallow lakes and ponds that are not deep enough to stratify into more than one or two thermal layers will have relatively high amounts of oxygen at all depths. This is due to continual lake mixing and diffusion of oxygen into the bottom waters induced by wind and wave action.

  The dissolved oxygen concentration was ***greater than*** **100 percent** saturation at the deep spot on the **August** sampling event. Layers of algae can increase the dissolved oxygen concentration in the water column since oxygen is a by-product of photosynthesis. Wave action from wind can also dissolve atmospheric oxygen into the upper layers of the water column.

- **Table 11: Turbidity**
  Table 11 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for in-lake and tributary turbidity. Turbidity in the water is caused by suspended matter, such as clay, silt, and algae. Water clarity is strongly influenced by turbidity. Please refer to the "Other Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

  As discussed previously, the epilimnetic (lower layer) turbidity was ***slightly elevated*** (**1.68 NTUs**) on the **September** sampling event. This suggests that the pond bottom may have been disturbed by the anchor or by the Kemmerer Bottle while sampling and/or that the lake bottom is covered by an easily disturbed, thick organic layer of sediment. When the pond bottom is disturbed, phosphorus rich sediment is released into the water column. When collecting the hypolimnion sample, make sure that there is no sediment in the Kemmerer Bottle before filling the sample bottles.
- **Table 12: Bacteria (*E.coli*)**
  Table 12 in Appendix B lists the current year and historical data for

bacteria *(E.coli)* testing. *E. coli* is a normal bacterium found in the large intestine of humans and other warm-blooded animals. *E.coli* is used as an indicator organism because it is easily cultured and its presence in the water, in defined amounts, indicates that sewage **may** be present. If sewage is present in the water, potentially harmful disease-causing organisms **may** also be present.

Bacteria sampling was not conducted this year. If residents are concerned about sources of bacteria such as failing septic systems, animal waste, or waterfowl waste, it is best to conduct *E. coli* testing when the water table is high, when beach use is heavy, or immediately after rain events.

- **Table 13: Chloride**

Table 13 in Appendix B lists the current year and the historical data for chloride sampling. The chloride ion (Cl^-) is found naturally in some surfacewaters and groundwaters and in high concentrations in seawater. Research has shown that elevated chloride levels can be toxic to freshwater aquatic life. In order to protect freshwater aquatic life in New Hampshire, the state has adopted **acute and chronic** chloride criteria of **860 and 230 mg/L** respectively. The chloride content in New Hampshire lakes is naturally low, generally less than 2 mg/L in surface waters located in remote areas away from habitation. Higher values are generally associated with salted highways and, to a lesser extent, with septic inputs. Please refer to the "Chemical Monitoring Parameters" section of this report for a more detailed explanation.

Chloride sampling was **not** conducted during **2010**.

- **Table 14: Current Year Biological and Chemical Raw Data**

Table 14 in Appendix B lists the most current sampling year results. Since the maximum, minimum, and annual mean values for each parameter are not shown on this table, this table displays the current year "raw," meaning unprocessed, data. The results are sorted by station, depth, and then parameter.

- **Table 15: Station Table**

As of the spring of 2004, all historical and current year VLAP data are included in the DES Environmental Monitoring Database (EMD). To facilitate the transfer of VLAP data into the EMD, a new station identification system had to be developed. While volunteer monitoring groups can still use the sampling station names that they have used in the past and are most familiar with, an EMD station name also exists for each VLAP sampling location. Table 15 in

Appendix B identifies what EMD station name corresponds to the station names you have used in the past and will continue to use in the future.

DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE AND CONTROL

Annual Assessment Audit:

During the annual visit to your pond, the biologist trained your group how to collect samples at the deep spot and the outlet. Your group learned very quickly and did a great job following instructions.

In future years, the biologist will conduct a "Sampling Procedures Assessment Audit" of your monitoring group during the annual visit. Specifically, the biologist will observe the performance of your monitoring group while sampling and will document the ability of the volunteer monitors to follow the proper field sampling procedures (as outlined in the VLAP Monitor's Field Manual). This assessment is used to identify any aspects of sample collection in which volunteer monitors fail to follow proper procedures, and also provides an opportunity for the biologist to retrain the volunteer monitors as necessary. This will ultimately ensure that the samples that the volunteer monitors collect are truly representative of actual lake and tributary conditions.

USEFUL RESOURCES

Best Management Practices to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution: A Guide for Citizens and Town Officials, DES Booklet WD-03-42, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/publications/wd/documents/wd-03-42.pdf.

Cyanobacteria in New Hampshire Waters Potential Dangers of Blue-Green Algae Blooms, DES fact sheet WMB-10, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wmb/documents/wmb-10.pdf.

Iron Bacteria in Surface Water, DES fact sheet WD-BB-18, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-18.pdf.

Lake Foam, DES fact sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-5.pdf.

Lake or Pond – What is the Difference? DES fact sheet WD-BB-49, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-49.pdf

Lake Protection Tips: Some Do's and Don'ts for Maintaining Healthy Lakes, DES fact sheet WD-BB-9, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-9.pdf.

Low Impact Development Hydrologic Analysis. Manual prepared by Prince George's County, Maryland, Department of Environmental Resources. July 1999. To access this document, visit www.epa.gov/owow/nps/lid_hydr.pdf or call the EPA Water Resource Center at (202) 566-1736.

Low Impact Development: Taking Steps to Protect New Hampshire's Surface Waters, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-17, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wmb/documents/wmb-17.pdf.

Proper Lawn Care In the Protected Shoreland, The Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, DES fact sheet WD-SP-2, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/sp/documents/sp-2.pdf.

Road Salt and Water Quality, DES fact sheet WD-WMB-4, (603) 271-2975 or www.des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/wmb/documents/wmb-4.pdf.

Shorelands Under the Jurisdiction of the Comprehensive Shoreland Protection Act, DES fact sheet SP-4, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/sp/documents/sp-4.pdf.

Through the Looking Glass: A Field Guide to Aquatic Plants, North American Lake Management Society, 1988, (608) 233-2836 or www.nalms.org.

Weed Watchers: An Association to Halt the Spread of Exotic Aquatic Plants, DES fact sheet WD-BB-4, (603) 271-2975 or http://des.nh.gov/organization/commissioner/pip/factsheets/bb/documents/bb-4.pdf.